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Homeric *pepnumenos*

In this paper I offer a description of Homeric *pepnumenos* (and *pepnumai*) that better accounts for its distribution than the standard approach, typical of which are the following commentary notes by Hainsworth:

- On *Od.* 8.388 (where *pepnumenos* qualifies Odysseus): “*p.* denotes one who observes the courtesies of life, especially in speech (*Il.* 9.58 [&] - all other occurrences are in formulae). It is seldom used of the great heroes (cf. 4.190 of Menelaus), but is a regular description of youthful or subordinate characters.”
- On *Il.* 9.57-8 *pepnumena bazeis*: “*p.* is applied to subordinate or youthful characters who know their place. Nestor’s point is that Diomedes has spoken to the Lord of Men frankly but as a young man should. [&] Agamemnon [&] is mollified into generosity by this respect for protocol.”
- On *Il.* 9.689: “*p.* [&] commends one who knows how to behave towards his elders or betters.”

While it is true that *pepnumenos* has a fixed connection with speech and frequently (though not always) qualifies youthful characters, the emphasis that this description lays on hierarchy and respect is misleading. I will argue that *p.* basically means ‘possess(ing) intelligence’ and is used of (the words, counsels) of (human) characters who distinguish themselves through their ability to correctly interpret social situations (cognitive) and say what is right (moral connotation). As is understandable from the fact that, in Homer, speech is the touchstone of intelligence, characters are commended with *p.* by the narrator when they are about to speak (speech introduction) or because speaking is their ‘profession’ (epithet phrases of heralds and counselors), by other characters because they have just spoken (or in some cases, are reputed to speak) wisely (direct speech and secondary focalization). The evidence can be divided into five categories:

1. Professional speakers (common to the *Iliad*, 7x, and the *Odyssey*, 6x): the heralds Talchybios, Idaios, Odios, Eurybates, Peisenor, and Medon; the counselors Antenor and Poulydamas; the seer Teiresias. It is attractive to see this category, where *p.* mostly figures in larger formulaic phrases and where what is at issue is doubtless eloquence, not respect, as traditional, i.e. as *p.*’s ‘home base’.
2. Young men, *p.*’s only other use in the *Iliad* (5x; *Odyssey* 52x). The Iliadic instances qualify youngsters who are exceptional thinkers and speakers for their age, i.e. despite their lack of life experience; they are far from deferential: Diomedes (9.58), Antilochus (23.440), and the ‘young noble’ impersonated by Hermes (24.377). This use has become the dominant one in the *Odyssey*, where *p.* is a key term with Telemachus (46x) and also qualifies his peer Peisistratos (3x). It forms the point of comparison for *p.*’s other applications in the *Odyssey* (apart from 1), namely:
3. The father figures whose social intelligence and eloquence Peisistratos and Telemachus are trying to emulate: Nestor, Menelaus, Odysseus, and Laertes (8x).

4. The suitors Eurymachos, Antinoos, and Amphinomos, who are foils of Telemachus (2x): irony.

This leaves a very small rest category, 5:

5. a) The *gnomai* in *Od.* 8.586, Hes. *Op.* 731

b) *Il.* 13.254, a key passage for Hainsworth's qualification "subordinate characters", where *p.* proves to be an *ad hoc* substitution for Meriones' usual epithet *douriklutos*. It draws attention to the absence of his spear, broken in 159ff. and the very reason for his presence behind the lines (cf. 255ff.).

Finally, I argue that the father-son theme, prominent with *p.* in the *Odyssey*, is already prefigured in the *Iliad*, where, for example, Poulydamas and the 'young noble' (sons) are opposed to Antenor and Priam (fathers), and where Antilochus (son of Nestor) and Diomedes ('could have been the youngest son of Nestor') are explicitly compared (Peisistratos, Nestor's true youngest son, inherits the qualification in the *Odyssey*, 4.204-6, with explicit mention of Antilochus and verbal echoes of the *Iliad*).